

City of Columbus

Downtown Emergency Evacuation Plan

The City of Columbus has developed a comprehensive plan to coordinate the evacuation of downtown Columbus in the event of an actual disaster or the threat of imminent danger.

For the purposed of this plan, the downtown area will be defined by the following boundaries:

On the West - Scioto River

On the South - I-70/71

On the East - I-71

On the North - I-670

The nature and extent of the event will determine the specific area to be evacuated, which may or may not be the entire downtown area.

Types of Evacuation

Depending on the event, one of two types of evacuation could be necessary:

- A precautionary evacuation may be appropriate when there is a credible threat directed at the Columbus downtown area. This may be limited to a specific area or the entire downtown. If time permits, this may be a staggered/timed release procedure to help alleviate traffic gridlock.
- An emergency evacuation will be necessary if a sudden event has occurred that requires the removal of all persons from the effected area as quickly as possible.

A third alternative is to shelter-in-place. In some situations, especially certain chemical spills, it may be safer to remain inside until the danger has passed.

Decision to Evacuate

The decision for an emergency evacuation, precautionary evacuation, or shelter-in-place will be made by the Incident Commander. For a precautionary evacuation, the Incident Commander will be a Deputy Police Chief. For an emergency evacuation, or shelter-in-place, the Incident Commander will be a ranking Fire official. In any case the evacuation will be coordinated with city officials through the City of Columbus Emergency Operations Center.

Notification

All public information will be coordinated through a Joint Public Information Center. The notice to evacuate may come from one or more of the following sources:

- Emergency Alert System over commercial radio and television stations.
- The NOAA Weather Radio which is now an all-hazards public warning system.
- Voice message on Franklin County Outdoor Siren Warning System
- Mobile public address system and/or door to door notification by emergency response personnel.
- Telephone notification to major downtown facilities from Columbus EOC.
- Information and instructions will also be posted on the city website, <http://www.cityofcolumbus.org>.

Specific information will be given regarding:

- Type of evacuation
- Evacuation routes
- Restricted routes
- Assembly areas for transportation pick-up
- Walking route instructions
- Shelter-in-place instructions

Persons transported from assembly areas on buses will be taken to an American Red Cross managed reception center outside the evacuation area.

What Can You Do?

Businesses

- Have building evacuation and shelter-in-place plans.
- Have a means of receiving and disseminating information to everyone in the building.
- Communicate and practice plans with employees.
- Encourage employees to pre-plan evacuation car-pools.

Individuals

- Know your company/building emergency procedures.
- If an evacuation is ordered, use designated evacuation routes as instructed.
- Pre-plan evacuation car pools with fellow employees.
- Pay attention and follow all instructions from; employer, building safety personnel, emergency responders and traffic controllers.
- Pre-plan with family how each will get home in the event of an evacuation, plan and discuss back-up phone numbers and meeting locations.

If you are unable to leave the area via private vehicle, go to the nearest announced assembly area for transportation pick-up. You will be provided with transportation to a reception center outside the evacuation area where you will need to find transportation home.